IN YOUR COMMUNITY

8 Adopt your storm drain

Photo credit: Adrian Dansis via the Clean Water Minnesota Media Campaign

Storm sewers discharge directly to rivers, lakes and streams untreated. If it goes down the storm drain, it goes in your water.

Take responsibility for keeping your block's storm drain free of leaves and trash. By keeping your storm drain clean, you're eliminating all that debris from entering and polluting the River!

9 Get active in your community

Photo credit: Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Serve on your watershed district board or park - or planning commission; join your lake association; and work with your neighbors to keep your streets and storm drains clean.

Residents near Diamond Lake, in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, (MCWD) came together to improve water quality through water-friendly landscaping practices, educational workshops, and storm drain adoptions. Find out more at www.goblue.friendsofdiamondlake.org.

10 Participate in community clean-ups

Photo credit: Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Neighbors can eliminate tons of leaves, dirt, trash, and other debris from rivers, lakes, and streams when they work together to clean them up. Join Friends of the Mississippi River's and the National Park Service's email lists to hear about metro-area clean-ups.

You can also contact the MN Department of Natural Resource's Adopt-a-River program for a toolkit to easily help you organize your own: www.dnr.state.mn.us/adoptriver/index.html. For more information on your watershed, visit the Board of Soil and Water Resources at: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wd

Community clean-ups like MCWD's Minnehaha Creek Clean Up are a great way to join your friends and neighbors in keeping your community clean.

Take the Pledge

Clean water is everyone's responsibility, and we can all do our part to help protect the Mississippi River and its watershed.

Through the *Stewardship Pledge*, you can identify which actions you will take at home and in your community to help protect and preserve rivers, lakes, and streams throughout Minnesota. By pledging to take action to prevent water pollution, you are helping to pass a cleaner, healthier Mississippi River on to future generations.

Find out more, and take the Stewardship Pledge, at www.stateoftheriver.com.

Want to do more?

Friends of the Mississippi River and the National Park Service offer dozens of educational and hands-on volunteer opportunities throughout the year to help the river. You can find about more about these programs by visiting us online.

Friends of the Mississippi River
360 North Robert Street, Suite 400
Saint Paul, MN 55101

(651) 222-2193

www.fmr.org

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
111 Kellogg Boulevard East, Suite 105
Saint Paul, MN 55101

(651) 290-4160

www.nps.gov/miss

www.stateoftheriver.com

STATE OF THE RIVER REPORT

STEWARDSHIP GUIDE

Photo credit: Friends of the Mississippi River

The *State of the River Report* illustrates that the Mississippi River has improved in both water quality and ecological health over time, but there is still a lot to be done in order to restore the river and reverse some disturbing trends.

Clean water is everyone's responsibility, and we can all do our part to help protect this vital natural resource.

This guide highlights the "top 10" stewardship actions that individuals can take with your friends and neighbors to help protect and restore the Mississippi River and its watershed for future generations.

After reading this guide, you can fill out the Stewardship Pledge, and commit to take action at home and in your community to protect and preserve Minnesota's water resources.

IN YOUR HOME OR APARTMENT

1 Don't flush your pills

Household wastewater ultimately discharges to surface waters throughout the state after treatment. If it goes down the drain, it goes in your water.

Expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications should never be disposed of down the drain. Wastewater treatment systems are not designed to remove these pollutants.

If your local drug store does not participate in a drug take-back program, contact your county solid waste office to see if they have a drug take back program in place.

If not, dissolve medicines in liquid, mix with fine materials (coffee grounds, cat litter) and place into a sturdy, sealable sandwich bag or plastic container before putting it in the garbage.

For more information on pharmaceuticals and the Mississippi River, see page 42 of the *State of the River Report.*

For more information on what you can do, contact your county solid waste office, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, or visit DisposeMyMeds.org.

2 Use triclosan-free products

Triclosan is an antimicrobial product used in a variety of household products, including hand soap. Triclosan and its byproducts pose risks for aquatic life and health in the River. The use of antibacterial products provides no health benefits over plain soap and water, and should be avoided.

Check labels on soaps and personal care products and avoid those that contain triclosan.

For more information on triclosan and the Mississippi River, see page 38 of the *State of the River Report*. You can also visit: www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/triclosan.

For more information about products that contain triclosan, visit: http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredient/706623/TRICLOSAN/.

IN YOUR YARD AND GARDEN

3 Maintain a healthy lawn

Healthy lawns help reduce runoff pollution. To maintain a water-friendly lawn, set your lawnmower on a high setting (3") and leave grass clippings on the lawn. Aerate your lawn, and avoid excess watering.

If you use lawn chemicals and fertilizers, use them wisely (never over-apply these products) and always keep them on the lawn – not on sidewalks, streets, and driveways.

Homeowners or property managers who hire lawn care providers should look for those who have completed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Summer Turf Care Best Practices certification.

And remember: if you only go to a corner of your lawn to mow it, odds are you can replace it with flowering plants or native vegetation that help improve water quality and habitat in your community.

4 Keep the rain drop where it falls

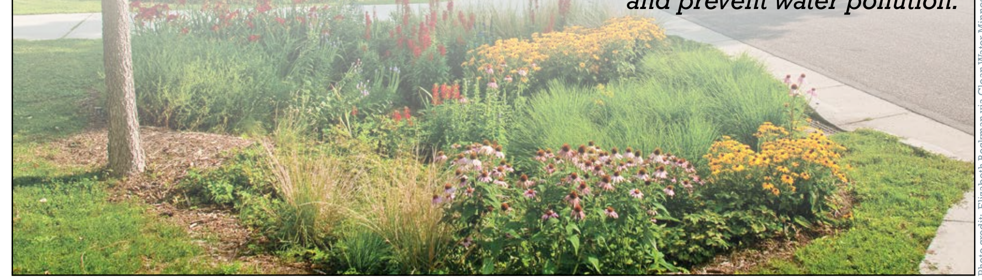
Excess runoff contributes to higher flows and can carry pollutants into local rivers, lakes, and streams. Capture and filter runoff with rain gardens, rain barrels, and perennial vegetation before it reaches the street.

Make sure your downspouts are directed to gardens and other areas that can use the water - never onto your driveway, street, or sidewalk.

For more information on how flow impacts the Mississippi River, see page 10 of the *State of the River Report*.

For more information about how rain gardens and native plantings can help you improve water quality while providing a beautiful, year-round landscaping amenity, please visit: www.bluethumb.org

Rain gardens capture stormwater runoff and prevent water pollution.



5 Pick up after your pet

Pet waste can wash into storm sewers and contribute to bacteria pollution in waters, including the Mississippi River. Clean pet waste from your yard and always pick up after your pet on walks.

For more information on bacteria and the Mississippi River, see page 14 of the *State of the River Report*.

SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

6 Rake up, sweep up, pick up

Leaves, grass, lawn chemicals, trash, and winter salts can wash into storm sewers and pollute local rivers, lakes, and streams throughout Minnesota.

Remove these materials from your street, sidewalk, and driveway before they wash into the river.

7 Water-friendly auto care

Dirt, oil, and chemicals from your car can contribute to water pollution. Wash your car at a car wash, where runoff is collected and treated. If you wash your car at home, do it on the lawn, where the water can filter into the ground naturally.

Regular car maintenance and tune-ups help detect leaks, and prevent chemicals from washing into rivers, lakes, and streams.

And if you seal your driveway, always choose asphalt-based sealants. Coal-tar sealant alternatives contain higher levels of harmful chemicals like PAHs that pose a risk to our environment. For more information on PAHs and coal-tar sealants, see page 43 of the *State of the River Report*.